

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEDAN 0192

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ENRG, ID
SUBJECT: GAS WELL BLOWOUT AT ARUN FIELD

REF: MEDAN 181 AND 190

1. RED ADAIR ARRIVED AT ARUN FIELD JUNE 6 AND ACCORDING TO MOBIL/MEDAN SOURCES, HAS INDICATED THAT HE CAN CAP THE WELL DOWN TO A POINT WHERE ONLY 100-200 CUBIC FEET A DAY ESCAPE. THIS WILL SERVE TO REDUCE THE FLAME AND NOISE (PERSONS WHO HAVE BEEN TO THE FIELD REPORT THAT THE NOISE LEVEL UP TO 500 METERS FROM THE BLOWOUT IS AROUND 90 DECIBELS OR SEEMINGLY THE STEADY SOUND OF A CONCORD TAKING OFF) WHILE THREE RELIEF WELLS ARE DUG. ADAIR IS REPORTED TO HAVE LEFT TO RETURN TO THE US TO ASSEMBLE EQUIPMENT FOR THE CAPPING WHICH WILL BE BROUGHT IN VIA FOUR HERCULES TO ARUN AREA. WITH THE ONE REMAINING DRILLING RIG AT ARUN, ONE RELIEF WELL HAS BEEN STARTED. OTHER RIGS HAVE TO BE BROUGHT FROM KARACHI AND POSSIBLY LIBYA. IT WILL TAKE AN ESTIMATED 60 TO 120 DAYS TO DIG EACH WELL.

2. AT THE PRESENT TIME A BLOW OUT PREVENTOR IS STILL OPERATING ON THE

WELL WHICH WILL LAST PERHAPS ANOTHER FOUR OR FIVE DAYS. WHEN IT
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GOES, THERE MAY BE UP TO ONE BILLION CUBIC FEET A DAY OF GAS ESCAPING. MOBIL OFFICIALS SAY, HOWEVER, THAT ADAIR CANNOT CAP THE WELL ANYWAY UNTIL THIS BLOW OUT PREVENTOR CEASES TO FUNCTION.

3. WITH PROSPECT THAT IF EVERYTHING GOES ACCORDING TO PLAN, BLOW OUT CAN BE CONTAINED IN ABOUT THREE MONTHS AND CLUSTER II WHERE BLOWOUT OCCURRED WILL BE PRODUCING AGAIN IN SIX MONTHS, MOBIL

OFFICIALS ARE CONSIDERABLY CALMER THAN EARLIER IN THE WEEK. PRESENT PROGNOSIS IS THAT THE FIRST NATURAL GAS LIQUIFICATION TRAIN WILL OPEN AUGUST 1 AS SCHEDULED BECAUSE CLUSTER III WELLS ARE STILL PRODUCING AND CAN PROVIDE SUFFICIENT NATURAL GAS FOR IT. THE SECOND TRAIN WILL BE DALAYED UNTIL CLUSTER II CAN BE REPAIRED.

4. MOBIL/PERTAMINA OFFICIALS ARE WORKING HARD ON COMMUNITY RELATIONS ASPECT OF PROBLEM AMONG ACEHNESE IN AFFECTED ZONE IN ORDER TO PREVENT PANIC AND TO ALLEVIATE HARDSHIPS. THE TREMENDOUS NOISE AND FLAME AND TREMBLING EARTH HAVE AROUSED MANY FEARS AMONG THE ACEHNESE IN THE VICINITY WHO, NATURALLY ENOUGH, HAVE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING THIS SWESOM BEFORE AND TEND TO RELATE IT TO SUPERSTIOUS NOTIONS SUCH AS THE WRATH OF GHOSTS FROM THE OLD GRAVEYARD NEAR-BY AND TO HAVE FEARS OF THE GROUND COLLAPSING ALTOGETHER.

2800 LOCALS WITHIN A 500 METER ZONE HAVE BEEN MOVED OUT WITH TEMPORARY SCHOOLS ESTABLISHED, VILLAGE ORIENTATION MEETINGS HELD, AND COMPENSATION PAYMENTS UNDER DISCUSSION.

5. MORE EXPERTS FROM ABROAD ARE EXPECTED TO ARRIVE TO ASSIST WITH PROBLEM. MOBIL EXECUTIVE JDAFREY LUCY SMITH EXPECTED FROM NEW YORK JUNE 9.
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